parameters, cost reduction measures and increase in price of steel etc.

(v) High manpower cost.

(c) and (d) Government has been in constant dialogue with SAIL and has been periodically revivewing their performance with a view to increasing their competitiveness and efficiency. Accordingly, to check losses and improve the financial health of SAIL, the Company has drawn up a comprehensive financial and business restructuring plan. The measures outlined in the plan include, inter-alia:

(i) Reduction in operational costs by reducing input costs, reducing consumption of raw materials and other inputs and by increasing operating efficiencies;

(ii) Improvement in techno-economic parameters such as fuel and power consumption;

(Hi) Increased recovery for services/facilitites;

(vi) Right sizing manpower through a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS);

(v) Asset restructuring;

(vi) Disposal of idle assets; and

(vii) Financial restructuring.

Production of Steel

†606. SHRI RAGHAVJI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the, present production capacity of the steel plants in the public as well as private sector in the country;

(b) the total annual consumption of steel, together with the quantum of steel consumed within the country and quantum of export thereof;- and

(c) the steps being taken to increase the consumption, particularly to increase the export in case the consumption is less than the production?

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) The present production capacity of crude steel in the public and private sector steel plants in the country is approximately 33-24 million tonnes, as detailed below:—

(In '000 tonnes)

Sector	Capacity
Public	15316
Private	17930
TOTAL:	33246

(b) The apparent consumption of finished steel in the country during 1998-99 was 23.54 million tonnes & 1.77 million tonnes were exported during the year.

(c) Government has been taking several steps to increase the consumption of steel. The Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel and Joint Plant Committee have been organising Seminars to promote steel consumption. More recently, a National Campaign to promote consumption of steel was launched. The Campaign has identified specific products made of steel with high market potential such as storage bins for grains and water tanks to increase usage of steel in new areas like rural and agricultural sector. To boost export of iron and steel, Government have set up a 'Steel Exporters Forum', under the Chairmanship of the Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel, with major steel producers/associations as its members. Government has also decided to earmark Rs. 5 crores for export promotion and market development.

In addition to this, Government has also taken steps to increase the export. These include:—

(i) Full convertibility of export earning at market rate of exchange;

(ii) Facility available to exporters to import their requirement of raw materials duty free under the Advance Licensing Scheme;

(iii) Refund of the duty paid on any imported or excisable material used in the manufacture of export goods;

(iv) Exemption of export earning from income tax under Section 80 HHC and;

(v) Enhancement of duty credit rates under Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) Scheme on most of the iron and steel items to encourage export of iron and steel.

Revival Plan for Alloy Steel Plant, Durgapur

607. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether revival plan for Alloy Steel Plant (ASP), Durgapur has been submitted by the trade unions to the SAIL Management;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to restore ASP back to health from the present crisis;

(c) whether measures are being taken to technologically improve ASP's stainless steel making and casting facilities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) to (d) Trade Unions have submitted a revival plan for Alloy Steel Plant, Durgapur to Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL). In pursuance thereof, a committee has been constituted by SAIL to examine the various issues including, the suggestions for technological improvement for reduction of cost of production and also improving stainless steel production.

Package for revival of SAIL

608. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any package for revival of loss-making SAIL;